



MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE:

A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS

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Media Paint Bleak Picture of Economy Despite Positive Indicators

Many economic indicators are strong, including 49 consecutive months of job growth, but that has not stopped the mainstream media from predicting a gloomy economic future. Some news outlets have even discussed the possibility of another “Black Monday,” when panicked selling led to a dramatic stock market crash on October 19, 1987.

A Business and Media Institute (BMI) survey released on October 17 found that there have been 38 negative economic stories on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts just since September 1.

A separate, long-term BMI study on economic reporting found that network evening shows presented a negative economic picture 62 percent of the time between August 1, 2005 and July 31, 2006. In fact, BMI found that since August 2003 “the media have reported that everything from oil prices, hurricanes, climate change, and terrorism were supposed to plunge the U.S. economy into recession.”



News Coverage Attacks Abstinence Education

A Culture and Media Institute (CMI) study released on October 16 shows a troubling media assault on abstinence education.

The CMI survey found that more than 200 newspaper, cable, and broadcast news stories have reported questionable information about the supposed failures of abstinence education programs while ignoring reliable data that support the programs. Additionally, the CMI report states that the media have failed to report on major peer-reviewed studies that support abstinence education.

The CMI study also shows that network television programs such as CBS’ *Cold Case* and ABC’s *Boston Legal* have portrayed proponents of abstinence education in a negative way.

ABC Provides Example of Positive Media Coverage of Iraq

The mainstream media often have neglected to cover the good news occurring every day in Iraq.

For example, the Iraq Interior Ministry announced this week that “violence in Iraq has dropped by 70 percent since the end of June, when U.S. forces completed their build-up of 30,000 extra troops to stabilize the war-torn country,” according to a Reuters report. Unfortunately, mainstream media outlets ignored the good news.

That is why it was particularly refreshing to see ABC *World News* feature a report on October 22 about “an extraordinary comeback story” in Fallujah, where the hard work and sacrifice of America troops has helped increase security in the city’s streets.

Anchor Charles Gibson described how “Fallujah is undergoing a remarkable turnaround. Tribal leaders, local officials, and the U.S. Marines have united behind a common cause – bringing security to a place that had been one of Iraq’s most insecure.”

Reporter Miguel Marquez explained that “the markets bustle. Traffic chokes the streets. Marines, once despised here, are now a welcome sight.”